

REMARKS:

Claims 3-5 and 10-15 are in the case and presented for consideration.

New claims 11-15 have been added. Support for new claims 11, 12 and 15 can be found, for example, in Fig. 7. Support for new claim 13 can be found, for example, in Figs. 9-10. New claim 14 corresponds to claim 10 (also see, e.g., Fig. 7). Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 10 is rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,657,370 to Tsugane, et al. ("Tsugane") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0132633 of Johnson, et al. ("Johnson"). The reasons for the rejection are stated on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action states that col. 4, lines 38-47 of Tsugane discloses the claimed "recessed portions provided on each guide groove to receive and releasably engage each said hinge device at a selected slide position." See Office Action at page 3, second bullet point.

Contrary to the Office's interpretation, the recessed portion (9) according to Tsugane is a depressed region formed on the first housing (1) for receiving the second housing (2). See, e.g., Tsugane, col. 4, lines 39-40. Unlike the recessed portions of the claimed invention (which is provided in the guide grooves), recessed portion (9) of Tsugane is located between the guide grooves (7) . See Fig. 3B (reproduced below).

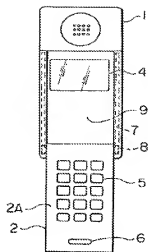


Fig. 3B of Tsugane

Johnson also does not provide the missing teaching of Tsugane. See, e.g., Fig. 6 of Johnson (reproduced below) which shows an elongated groove (17) without any recessed portions formed thereon.

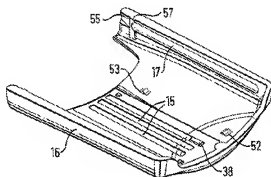


Fig. 6 of Johnson

A claimed invention is *prima facie* obvious when three basic criteria are met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the reference themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or

to combine the teachings therein. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. And, third, the prior art reference or combined references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

As neither Tsugane nor Johnson teach or suggest the “recessed portions provided on each guide groove to receive and releasably engage each said hinge device at a selected slide position”, as is recited in independent claim 10 (independent claim 14 has similar features), the independent claims are not rendered obvious by the cited references.

For at least this reason, Applicant submits that the rejection has been overcome and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim.

With regard to the dependent claims, these claims ultimately depend from the independent claims, which has been shown not to be obvious, and, hence, allowable, over the cited references. Accordingly, the remaining dependent claims are also allowable by virtue of their dependence from an allowable base claim.

The Office Action also acknowledges that Tsugane fails to clearly disclose:

wherein each hinge device is composed of a hinge case... inserted in setting holes of... the first and second members, a ball bearing... mounted [on]... said hinge case in an engaging condition with said guide groove..., and resilient means [adapted to urge the ball bearing into the engaging condition with said guide grooves]. See Office Action at page 3, first full paragraph.

The Office Action cites paragraphs [0029] and [0032] and Fig. 5 of Johnson as teaching the claimed hinge device. The Office then concludes that “it would have been obvious... to modify Tsugane et al. to include Johnson et al. in order to have a device capable of being slidable and rotatable around a pair of hinged devices.” See Office Action at page 3, third full paragraph. Applicant respectfully maintains that Johnson does not

teach a hinge device that contains a component that is rotatable and/or is resiliently mounted. Rather, Johnson uses two pairs of pins (35) which differ both structurally and functionally from the arrangement of the hinge device recited in the claims. See, e.g., Johnson, paragraph [0032] and Fig. 5 (reproduced below).

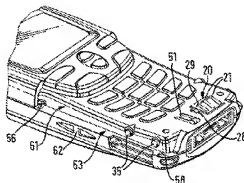


Fig. 5 of Johnson

Each of the pins appear to be immovably fixed to or mounted on the side of the housing member and fashioned as an one-piece component. See, e.g., Johnson, paragraph [0033]. In contrast, the hinge device of the claimed invention is provided with, among other elements (e.g., resilient member), a resiliently mounted ball bearing which is in operative engagement with the guide grooves to permit relative movement of the members between the desired selected positions. In additional, the operatively associated combination of the resiliently mounted ball bearing and the recessed portions allow the members to be releasably retained at certain predetermined positions. For this additional reason, Tsugane and Johnson fail to support the alleged case of prima facie obviousness advanced in the Office Action. Thus, the slide mechanism recited in claims 10 and 14 is patentable over Tsugane and Johnson.

Applicant has endeavored to make the foregoing response sufficiently complete to

permit prompt, favorable action on the subject patent application. In the event that the Examiner believes, after consideration of this response, that the prosecution of the subject patent application would be expedited by an interview with an authorized representative of the Applicant; the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Applicant respectfully submits that by this Amendment, the application has been placed in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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